

## Interview H0214: Urgyen [tib. o rgyan], (India, 1983) : Part No. 8 of 9

*The interviewee was a well-known Drepung Loseling monk who at one time held the powerful position of Chagdampa. He talks about the Riji and Laji and the selection of the Shengo and Gegö, and about the conflict between the Chabu of Drepung's Loseling College and the 13th Dalai Lama. He also talks about the Chabril and Nyertsang officials.*

In the Drepung [Laji](#), the abbots were appointed by the government. In Sera and Ganden, only the incumbent abbots were in the [Laji](#), however in Drepung, the ex-abbots (tib. khensur [mkhan zur]) were also in the [Laji](#). Under them, there were the two [Shengo](#), the [Tsogchen chemmo](#), the Phodrang depa, the two Jiso, and the Tashi khangsar [tib. bkra shis khang gsar] from the Namgyal Tratsang. This was the big [Laji](#) (tib. [Laji](#) chekha [tib. bla spyi che khag]).

The middle size [Laji](#) (tib. dringa ['bring khag]) in addition also had the following three: the Khamtsen [gegen](#) of Hamdong [tib. har gdong] and Samlo [tib. bsam lho], the Parkhang depa, and the Chökhang depa [tib. mchod khang sde pa]. The small [Laji](#) had the Jama and Chabril.

Normally, only the [Laji](#) chekha would meet regardless of whatever kind of joint meeting (tib. lhengye [lhan rhyas]) they held. The box holding the seal of the [Laji](#) was kept by the Phodrang depa and he would hand it over to the senior abbot. Under them, there was the official called the Lama [chandzö](#) who was appointed by the Khempo tripa and he served them.

Q

What was the main duty of the [Laji](#)?

A

They would collect the income of the Tratsang like the loads of rice, the red serge material and the [khata](#) called [nangdzö](#) [tib. nang mdzod] that were offered when they read the [gyabtho](#) [tib. skyag tho]. This was offered through the Shengo's office. In general, all

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the income [like this] from outside went to the [Laji](#). The [Laji](#) would accumulate these things and serve food to the monks.

Q

When would they serve this food?

A

There was no fixed time for this. They would do it whenever they got a little income. There were also a few [miser](#) of the [Laji](#) who paid [mibo](#) to the [Laji](#) from early times.

Q

To whom did they belong?

A

They were there from the very early times in Phenpo [tib. 'phan po] and Lhoka, etc. paying the [mibo](#).

Did they belong to an estate that was given to the [Laji](#)?

There wasn't any basis like an estate because they were just payers of [mibo](#). There were lot of people saying that they belonged to the Drepung [Laji](#).

Q

They didn't have any land basis, right?

A

Yes. As long as they paid the [mibo](#), they were free [tib. dkar po gu yangs] and they didn't need to work doing taxes as long as they adhered to the law [tib. khriims khyer dgos ma red] of the place. Sometimes they would get appointed as a [gempo](#).

Q

Originally, how did this system start?

A

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It started from early times. When the government sent some edict, it would come to the [Laji](#), for example, like having to perform big rituals and when the Tratsang had to send monk soldiers when there was war.

Q

Whatever kind of trouble occurred, would the government send the edict to the [Laji](#)?

A

First they sent it to the Phodrang depa. It was addressed to the [Laji](#) and he would put a seal on it and deliver it to the [Laji](#). Then they would deliver it to the Khempo tripa, and if he needed to hold the [monastic] [tsongdu](#), the Khempo tripa would tell the Lama [chandzö](#) to send a notice calling for the [tsongdu](#) (monastic assembly). Then the incumbent Khempo and Kensur would come to the [tsongdu](#) and they would give a report and discuss the issue. They would also call the Khempo of the 4 Tratsang and do internal discussions and then they would go back to their own Tratsang and if it was an urgent matter, they would hold the [tsongdu](#) that very night in their [tratsang](#). If not, they would hold the [tsongdu](#) on the next day and give the answers on the next day or the day after that. They would send the monks to go somewhere if they had to. Regarding the [tonggo](#), the Jiso was in charge, but it was under the [Laji](#). The Phodrang depa worked for the government. He received the orders regarding Ganden [phodrang](#) and delivering messages.

Q

Was the Jiso appointed by the government?

A

Yes.

Q

Who would put forward the candidates?

A

The candidates came from the Tratsang and came from among the ex-Nyertsang [tib. gnyer tshang zur pa] officials.

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Q

The [Laji](#) would not deal with it, right?

A

Yes.

Q

What else did the [Laji](#) have to do? How about choosing the [Shengo](#) candidates?

A

The [Laji](#) did not deal with these candidates. The [Loseling](#) Khempo would choose the candidate from Loseling's böpashung [mitsen](#) and the Shagor Khempo would choose the candidates from the Nyaling Tsüsum [tib. nyang gling tshul gsum] (this was Nyango [tib. nyang go] Ling [tib. gling] and Tsümei [tib. tshul smad]). The [Gomang](#) Khempo would choose the candidates from the [Gomang](#) böpashung and the Düwa [tib. 'dul ba] Khempo would choose the candidates from Gomang's Gadong [tib. dga' gdong] [mitsen](#) and [Deyang](#) and Ngagpa [tib. sngags pa] Colleges would choose their own candidates.

Q

Was there a rotation among the [mitsen](#) for the [Shengo](#) candidates?

A

Yes. Some got the [Shengo](#) appointed every 3 years and some got it every 4 years. Some got it every 5 years and some 6 years. I am from böpashung (mitsen), so the [Loseling](#) Khempo would select the candidates from böpashung one month before the [Trugpa Tseshi](#) festival. The candidates had to be from a clean birth status [tib. skye rus gtsang ba], must be eloquent [tib. smra brjod bde ba] and must have had 19 years pass since they were admitted to the monastery. On the [Trugpa Tseshi](#), the böpashung [mitsen](#) would hold a meeting and put forward 5 candidates. If there were ex-nyertsang and ex-gegö, they would go first (as candidates). If not, they would select from the ordinary monks.

They would submit the candidates to the [Laji](#). The Khamtsen [gegen](#) had to go to the [Laji](#) on that day and report that these were the candidates from böpashung. The [khempo](#) would ask the names of the candidates one by one, starting from the first candidate. If

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they were suitable, the [khempo](#) would say yes and if not, he would say something like, "Didn't this person have a dispute in the past?" If the Khempo said that, they had to send a new candidate. If the Khempo said that all 5 candidates were all right, they could go as the candidates. The incumbent [Shengo](#) would report the candidates to the Chemmo at the [gag](#). The Chemmo would tell the abbots that on such and such a date they must come to the [gag](#) and the abbots would tell böpashung. On that day, they would send the 10 shengo candidates including the two incumbent ones who wore the special padded shoulders [tib. o bog].

After going to the [gag](#), the candidates had to go to the [Yigtsang](#) to show how they looked [tib. mi bab spyang zhu] and to do the reading test. They selected people who were different from the others and who looked alike [tib. 'dra 'dra'i dkyil nas ma 'dra ba]. They said, "From among the five of you, one will be approved." Then the [Trunyichemmo](#) would accompany us and we had to go to the stage where they performed the opera. Then we entered the small door of the yellow wall and went to the [gag](#). Then at the [gag](#), we would be served tea, [tsampa](#) and fried cookies (tib. khabse [kha zas] from the Dalai Lama's kitchen [tib. rtse gsol thab] before the [drungja](#) was held. We stayed there during the [drungja](#) and then the [Trunyichemmo](#) would call us and then in the yellow wall the [Trunyichemmo](#), the Drönyerchemmo, one tsendrön and one [simgag](#) [tib. gzim 'gag] were there. They closed the door and the house manager (tib. [khangnyer](#) [khang gnyer]) of [Norbulinga](#) held incense under the window of the palace and the Dalai Lama and the regent would watch from the window through the curtains made from very fine linen [tib. zhal sang]. We could hear them talking like whispering. In my time, the [Trunyichemmo](#) was Bumthang and I was the incumbent Gegö. He told me, "Send them in a relaxed manner. Don't be afraid." Then we sent the candidates one by one. After the 10 candidates went in, they came to the [drungja](#) in a line and went to have the audience with the Dalai Lama. All the candidates would be seated in line (tib. shugtre tang [bzhangs gral btang]).

Q

Where would you be seated?

A

In the hall where the Dalai Lama was. I would be seated in front of the Nangma khende [tib. nang ma khan sde] [the Khenche and the Khenjung]. I remember clearly that the

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Talama brought the reading test and he bowed his head towards the Drönyerchemmo. Probably he was seeking permission to read the reading test.

Q

Was the Dalai Lama still there?

A

He was on the throne. Then the two [Trunyichemmo](#) stood on two sides and the candidate who read the reading test stood in the middle. Then the first candidates went near the door and the Drönyerchemmo faced us and turned his back to the Dalai Lama and the candidates had to read their reading test. In the reading test, one and a half lines of the third smaller letters [tib. tshugs thung] and one and a half lines of half cursive [tib. tshugs ma 'khyug] and one and a half lines of the cursive script were written. After all the candidates read the reading test, they would sit and they served tea and [droma dresi](#). Then the Simgag would say, "Stand up." and then the ceremony was over and we went back and we didn't know what the outcome was. All the [Laji](#) would also go back after having an audience. We would also eat food and go back.

The abbots of [Loseling](#) and [Gomang](#) would stay at the [gag](#). They had brought a square piece of satin to wrap things [tib. 'bog]. Each of them also brought a [khata](#) nangdzö scarf in the pouch of their robes. After some time, the approval would be made, and while the Drönyerchemmo stood there, the two abbots would go there and prostrate three times and hold the [khata](#) and receive the approval from the Drönyerchemmo. They wrapped the approval in the square satin and covered the wrap with the [khata](#) nangdzö and carried it on their backs and rode back to the monastery.

On that day, the [Laji](#) would meet in the Jiso office. They brought the monastic charter of the 5th Dalai Lama and all the abbots would come down. They would be ready to burn incense on the rooftop of the Jiso. When they saw the abbots coming from the mountain range near [Nechung](#), they would burn the incense and then from the [tsogchen](#) (main assembly hall) they would blow the big horns and the [gyaling](#) [tib. rgya gling] and several thousand of monks came and were packed in on the stone floor courtyard area. On that day, all the abbots would come down to the stone floor courtyard area and bow down [ch. zhan bai]. The two abbots would bring the square satin and would put it in a [bo](#) container that was full of wheat. Right after that, they served tea and the [Tsogchen chemmo](#) would start the prayers for the tea offering (tib. chamchö [ja mchod]) and all of them would drink

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a cup of tea. Then they served [droma dresi](#) and the Phodrang depa would deliver the approval list to the Khempo tripa while the abbots were standing. We would show the [undamaged] seal on the satin bog container to the other people. And then they gave the approval to the Khempo tripa and he would say, "Is it okay to open it?" and then he opened it and then they sent the [thabyog](#) to deliver the message to the people who were approved. Then everyone knew who the new [Shengo](#) were because they could see where the [thabyog](#) went to deliver the messages.

Then the [thabyog](#) would say, "Congratulations! Please receive the approval." [tib. bkra shis bde legs phyag rtags bzhes rogs gnang]. Some even would say, "Probably, I am not the one who was approved. Didn't you make a mistake?" [tib. nga a yin/ nor ba ma red dam]. If the [Shengo](#) from [Gomang](#) was a Gegö and the one from [Loseling](#) was a Nyertsang, the [Gomang](#) one would become the senior [Shengo](#). However, if the [Gomang](#) was a Nyertsang and the [Loseling](#) was a Gegö, the [Loseling](#) would become the senior. If both of them were ordinary monks, it went according to their seniority. If both were [gelong](#), it went according to the [gelong](#)'s seniority. If one was a [gelong](#) and the other was not, the [gelong](#) would become the senior. At that time, the 2 old shengo were there, so they would go to the [Laji](#).

Q

Were the new shengo there?

A

No. They were in their [shag](#) (apartments). If the [Loseling](#) one was the senior [Shengo](#), the [Laji](#) would give the approval to the [Loseling](#) Khempo and if the [Gomang](#) was the senior, the approval would be given to the [Gomang](#) Khempo. Then the [Laji](#) would adjourn. After that, the old senior shengo would go to the new senior shengo who then knew that he was the senior and the new shengo will be invited. Then the old shengo would sit at the head and they would put a plate full of wheat.

Q

Who would bring this wheat?

A

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This will be prepared by the new [Shengo](#). There will be somebody who will explain how to do that. Then the old [Shengo](#) would put a [khata](#) on the wheat and say this is the [khata](#) for receiving the order [tib. bka' sgyur mjal dar]. Then both of them would be seated and from the old shengo's side, two ex-monastic officials (tib. Lene [thönsin](#) [las ne thon zin]) would come with 1 Khata Ashe and 2 Subchi [tib. zub phyi] and say, "Please grant leave to the old [Shengo](#) [who came] before me from the tsog" [tib. nga yan chad kyi zhal ngo rnying pa rnam tshogs nas dgongs pa gngang rogs gngang]. When he said before me, it included all the ex-shengo.

Q

They would ask for leave before the new one did the inauguration ceremony, right?

A

Yes. Then one Lene [thönsin](#) came from the new Shengo's side and gave the [khata](#) similarly like the old one did and said, "Sir, please allow me to attend the inauguration ceremony." [tib. sku zhabs/ gsar pa'i khri 'don ring yong chog pa cig]. He asked this because it was the time of the summer retreat (tib. [yarne](#) [dbyar gnas]). Then they served tea and [droma dresi](#) and the old Shengos returned and the people coming to offer the [khata](#) (of congratulations) to the new shengo rushed in like they offered [khata](#) to the general Yasor during the Mönlam.

After that, the two new [Shengo](#) would go for a pilgrimage in the Tratsang and the Khamtsen, and then on the next morning they went to the [Yigtsang](#) and received the order, and then they went to the [gag](#) for an audience with the Dalai Lama or the regent for their having gotten newly appointed (tib. sanjel [gsar mjal]). And then they went to the [Jokhang](#) for a pilgrimage and since the head caretaker there (tib. [könyerpön](#) [dkon gnyer dpon]) was from [Loseling](#), he would come to receive the [Shengo](#) outside the [Jokhang](#) where people would be praying. The Könyerpön would invite them into the place where the Könyerpön stays. After that, the [Shengo](#) went to one's relatives or friends in Lhasa and then they returned to the monastery.

Q

They would not hold any ceremony in Lhasa, right?

A



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Right. On the next day, they went to the Tenma [tib. bstan ma] Deity and on the day after that, they went to the Gadong [tib. dga' gdong] Deity to ask for a prophecy. After that, the handing over from the old [Shengo](#) to the new would be done in 7 days, and the Khempo tripa would come as the witness (tib. tröpaṅ [sprod dpang]). Then the old and the new [Shengo](#) would consult and the old would serve rice and the new would serve the droma and they would make the tea by turns. Normally, when the monks wear laymen's clothes they would get fined and the [Laji](#) would accumulate this money and lend loans to get interest which was used for making the square satin bog used during the Mönlam. After that, the new [Shengo](#) would hold the inauguration ceremony and when the new ones came to the Shengo's office, their friends would receive them with incense and another person would carry the Shengo's staff which was placed on wheat in a tray.

After that, they prayed saying words like, "In the sanctuary surrounded by snow mountains" [tib. gangs ri ra bas bskor ba'i zhing khams na] etc. Then they beat gongs while the old [Shengo](#) would hand over the staff to the new [Shengo](#). Then the old shengo would sit below and the new one would sit above while they beat the gong and then the old [Shengo](#) went back with 4 [geyog](#) and 6 [thabyog](#) escorting them yelling, "Make way!" [tib. phar rgyugs shig]. Then they went to their [shag](#) where people came to offer resignation [khata](#) called (tib. trishö jedar [khri bshol mjal dar]). They would serve [droma dresi](#). However, they would not take off their shoulder padding [tib. o bog]. They would only take off their padding on the 5th, when the first midday [tib. [gung](#) tshigs] [mangja](#) would be started by the senior [Shengo](#) and the second [mangja](#) would be started by the junior [Shengo](#) and they would go around the [tsog](#) (Prayer Assembly) carrying incense. At this time, both of them had their padding on, but after that they took it off and they could go wherever they wanted.

Q

Then the new [Shengo](#) would bring the big satin [thanka](#), right?

A

Yes. Then the old [Shengo](#) would bring up the big satin [thanka](#) and the new [Shengo](#) would bring it back to the [tsogchen](#) while carrying his staff and then he went for pilgrimage and then he would hold the inauguration ceremony and receive [khata](#) from other people. On that day, the [Riji](#) would be held and both of the [Shengo](#) would give a speech to the 40-50 people working for the Lama [Riji](#) who were bowing their bodies on the stone floor.

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From the 2nd, the [tsog](#) starts and the [Shengo](#) would give the speech at the [tsog](#) [tib. tshogs gtam].

Q

What would they do on the 5th?

A

The new [Shengo](#) would invite the representative of the [Yigtsang](#) and the new [Shengo](#) would read the monastic charter (tib. jayig [bca' yig]) at the [tsog](#) and give the prayer assembly speech (tib. tsogtam).

Q

At that time, were the old [Shengo](#) there?

A

No. They had already returned after going around the assembled monks with the incense.

Q

Where would the new one's stand while the old ones were going around with the incense?

A

The new [Shengo](#) would stand in the monk's row while holding their staffs.

Q

At this time, did the old [Shengo](#) have their staffs?

A

No. They just went around with the incense while still wearing the padding on their shoulders.

Q

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So while the two Old shengo were on their throne, the new ones would stand over there, right?

A

Yes.

Q

How much did they have to spend for the inauguration ceremony?

A

They have to spend about 100 [dotse](#). Then their friends would come to offer them [khata](#). If their Mitsen have many monk who could work, they didn't need to hire people. Otherwise, they hired people and prepared the accommodations and food for the guests. After the inauguration ceremony, the two Nyerpa would come and start their work.

Q

Were there some [Shengo](#) who didn't have particular Mitsen?

A

Some of their Mitsen was scattered at long distances, so they couldn't help them. If the Mitsen was nearby, they went to help.

Q

Where would they hand over the charter?

A

They would hand it over in the Longevity Temple [tib. tshe dpag lha khang] on the roof top of the [tsogchen](#). In that temple, they had an image of the 5th Dalai Lama, so they handed it over in front of the good-luck image.

Q

At that time, who else would come there other than the old and the new [Shengo](#)?

A

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Only the two Nangma and two Chabril of the old and new Shengos would sit face to face.

Q

Would they change the Nangma and Chabril when the [Shengo](#) were changed?

A

Yes, they did. They came from their own [shagtsang](#) and if they don't have any in their [shagtsang](#), they would hire some of their friends.

Q

When they handed over the [Shengo](#) position, would the [Laji](#) come?

A

The Khempo tripa had to come as the witness.

Q

How would they be seated then?

A

The Khempo tripa sat above facing down. The two old [Shengo](#) sat on the right side and the two new [Shengo](#) sat on the left side.

Q

Did they put the charter in the box?

A

Yes. And then a Geyog would bring the charter and show it to the new [Shengo](#) and the new [Shengo](#) would say, "What is this? There is something here [unclear], and there would be like 5 [sang](#) and 10 [sang](#) which will be picked up by the two old [Shengo](#). [unclear]

Q

Regarding the [Laji](#), it was that much, right? [unclear]

A

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Yes. Shall I tell you about the [tratsang](#)?

Q

Yes, please.

A

The [Loseling](#) Khempo was appointed by the Dalai Lama and the 4 Chabu were appointed by the relevant Tratsang. But the [Loseling](#) Chabu were appointed by the government. In early times, they were not appointed by the government and they came from the relevant Tratsang, but later [this changed] when [Loseling](#) created a disturbance [tib. zing 'khrug] against the government.

Q

It was during the 13th Dalai Lama's time when the monk with flat nose nicknamed Anjam Nale [tib. an 'jam ? sna leb] was there, right?

A

Yes. And it was caused by the [three chabu] the [Tshaja](#), Phuja and Kongja. There was a lot of talk about the Drönyerchemmo called Abso. And probably there were also a lot of talk regarding Tengyeling, but I don't know that in detail. Then the Drönyerchemmo called them to come to his house. ... [unclear] At that time I was a child.

Probably the 3 Chabu were called to the [gag](#) and when they were going there, the servant (tib. [söpön](#) [tib. gsol dpon] of the [Deyang](#) Tsenshab [tib. tshan zhabs] was standing at Gyetse Lubding and he told the three [chabu](#), "Do not go to [Norbulinga](#) to see the Drönyerchemmo because if you see him today, it will be not good at all for you, so go back to the monastery." But the [Tshaja](#) being a [Khampa](#) said, "No matter whatever is going to happen good or bad, let's go." So they went to the [gag](#), but the Drönyerchemmo was not there. Then when they went to his house, the Chemmo had gone to [Shölpa](#) and had left a message telling them to come to [Shölpa](#). Actually, they were to be arrested when they went there. The Chemmo was upstairs and locked them in the prison called Panding for three days. He had deployed soldiers all around there. Then they were banished wearing white chubas. The [Tshaja](#) was whipped and had shackles and a cangue put on for his entire life (tib. tsego tseja [tib. tshe sgo tshe lcags]. He was banished to [unclear] Shiga. The Phuja was banished to Tho [tib. do ba] Dzong and he had to go through the

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[Ramagang](#) [tib. ra ma sgang] ferry site. As for the Kongja, they just fined him and let him return to the monastery.

The [Tshaja](#) was banished, but the monks didn't know that and were waiting for him to come back. After they knew that the [Tshaja](#) had been banished, the monks rushed out [of the monastery to Norbulinga] and did all sorts of lawless and unprincipled things (tib. trimey lugmey [tib. khirms med lugs med] on the stage of [Norbulinga](#), And they defecated in between the flowers there. When [Shölkhang](#) came outside and told them that he will report this, the monks said "You old man keep quite, we have to say three words to the Dalai Lama. Please meet us [tib. tsig gsum zhu rgyu yod/ zur mjal gngang rogs]. [tib. spo lags khyed rang gis ga'i shes kyi ma red/ nga [tsho](#) rgyal ba rin po che mjal dgos yod/ khyug tsam zhal mjal gngang rogs gngang/ tshig gsum zhu rgyu] The Dalai Lama was agitated by this.

Anyway, Tsögo [tib. mtsho sgo] [the general] took his troops and went through Dambag [tib. dan 'bag] village [to Drepung] and Salungnga [tib. sa lung ba] [another general] went through [Nechung](#) [to Drepung]. I remember the [soldiers] blowing their bugles. The monks had piled stones on the roofs and they attached cleavers on sticks. They were supposed to hit people with that. Then I remember that there was a hailstorm and heavy rain which made the gorge much bigger.

They went to ask the deity Tenma for a prophecy and Tenma said that she turned a vase of water upside down which caused a very severe hailstorm which even killed dogs, crows and hawks.

It was also said that some people were driven away by the water and the war stopped [tib. dmag thag chod]. The monks couldn't come down and the soldiers also couldn't charge up because of the hailstorm. After the sky cleared, the Dalai Lama send an edict (tib. kayig [bka' yig] saying do not shoot at Drepung. Even if they attack, you are not allowed to counter attack [tib. mar dgra byas kyang/ yar rgyag mi chog]. After this nobody fired guns.

Then the monk prisoners were handed over to the Kudrak families [and Labrang] like Surkhang, [Shatra](#), [Shölkhang](#), Tsarong, [Yabshi](#) Langdun, Phala, Detrug [tib. sde drug] Labrang, [Trimön](#), and Tsomönling [tib. tshe smon gling] Labrang. There were`about 50-60 prisoners who were brought through the [Barkor](#) Street in a line with their leg shackles clanging.

Drönyerchemmo Abso lived in Tsomönling and when people came to visit him they would say, "Today his mood is not good so you should not see him."

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Since that time, the Chabu were appointed by the government. I remember that the late [Tshaja](#) would tell us, "When I was appointed [Tshaja](#), [Trunyichemmo](#) Tenpa Dargye [tib. bstan pa dar rgyas] gave the the following order, "According to the order from the Dalai Lama's secretariate (tib. gzim chung ga) and mainly in order not to have Buddhism shaken and to adhere to the government, we are giving this [position of [Tshaja](#) and Phuja] to the nearby [tragyün](#) (monks from Central Tibet)." [tib. gzim chung 'gag gi bka' sgyur dgongs don/ gtso chen sangs rgyas bstan pa yo 'khyom mi 'byung ba'i ched dang gzhung sa dga' ldan pho brang la spyi bkur zhu ched nye skor grwa rgyun la gsol ras bstsal ba yin]. The [Tshaja](#) also said, "However, when the Dalai Lama was no more, they acted according to the changed situation (tib. nedü tsi [gnas dus brtsis]". The Khempo had to send the candidates for the [Tshaja](#), Phuja and Kongja to the [Yigtsang](#) and then they gave the approval. Since then the [Laja](#) (tib. bla phyag] was appointed by the Khempo but the [Tshaja](#), Phuja and Kongja were appointed by the government. And the Chagdampa was also appointed by the government from the time of the 13th Dalai Lama.

Q

Before that, they were appointed by the [Shengo](#), right?

A

Yes. The two Nyertsang were appointed by the Tratsang. The Chabu and the Khamtsen [gegen](#) would meet and select some candidates and then do a [senriy](#) lottery in front of Deity Tenma and appoint the Nyertsang. Later, 4 Bungdzö were appointed (created). The reason why they appointed Bungdzö was that in the beginning there a monk called [Gyerong](#) Geshela [tib. rgyal rong dge bshes lags] who lived at the time of the 13th Dalai Lama. He gave 1,000 [dotse](#) as capital and 4 [bungdzö](#) were appointed to handle this capital. He also brought one thousand Buddha statues [tib. sangs rgyas stong sku] from China.

It was said verbally that [Loseling](#) was grateful to Reting because the religious estates of [Loseling](#) were given back during the Reting regency. However, mainly it was not given by the regent Reting. The 13th Dalai Lama was agitated because of the [Loseling](#) revolt, so when [Loseling](#) built the new house in the year when I was born, they reported this to the Dalai Lama asking him to do the consecration [tib. rab gnas dge legs char 'bebs], but he didn't give an answer. This was after the [Tshaja](#) and Phuja were banished

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After that, all of a sudden the Dalai Lama went to [Tse](#) and then stayed one week in Drepung Monastery. The Dalai Lama was pleased and he send a letter through the stable boy [tib. chibs g.yog] to bring [trangga](#) garpo and he gave 3 [trangga](#) garpo to each monk in [Loseling](#) and 2 [trangga](#) garpo to each monk in the [tsogchen](#). Then the Dalai Lama said that the [Tshaja](#) can come back to the monastery, [unclear] however, when the letter was sent to the [Tshaja](#) saying that he could come back, it was said that he had died. Anyway, he was killed or died there and he couldn't come back.

Then the Dalai Lama gave the order through Chemmo saying that [Loseling](#) can make whatever report directly through the Chemmo, but they didn't dare to report. However, later the Dalai Lama again repeated the same order and asked, "Don't you have anything to report?" And then they petitioned asking to get their estates (chöshi) [that were confiscated] back.

At that time, Gyaritsel etstae [tib. rgya ri tshal] belonged to [tsidrung] Kogpentse and Norbugang [tib. nor bu sgang] belonged to Trekhang [tib. 'bras khang] who became Kyabing [tib. skyabs dbyings] [the Dewashung governor in Tashilunpo] and the Gyantse Mesong [?] estate belonged to Tsarong. All of these had gotten the endorsement for their ownership. In the beginning, they had the priest-patron relationship with [Loseling](#), but later they asked for the estates and got the ownership and they could give whatever amount [of grain] they wanted to [Loseling](#). Later, during the 13th Dalai Lama, he decided to cancel all of these land tenure documents and return the religious estate (chöshi) to [Loseling](#). This plan was made but the approval was yet to be given when the Dalai Lama passed away.

Later, they reported this to Reting regent and he asked the [gag](#) about this. They reported that the Dalai Lama had decided to return the estates. Then the [tsongdu](#) gyendzom was held and they approved the 13th Dalai Lama's decision and returned all the estates to [Loseling](#).

Later the Chabu gave 2 [khe](#) of grain and 150 [sang](#) and the Bungdzö gave 3 [khe](#) of grain and 5 [dotse](#) to each monk in one day. And they invited the Dalai Lama to the [tsog](#) [tib. tshogs phebs].

Q

When did they do that?

A

It was done just before the revolt [in 1959].



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Q

What were the duties of the Bungdzö?

A

Their duties were to take charge of the estates and take charge of all the endowments which were given for the monks' salary (tib. [phog](#) [phogs thebs]). Some would leave endowments with the Chabu and some would leave the endowments with the Bungdzö. And some would leave half of an endowment with the Chabu and half of the endowment with the Bungdzö. They would give the monks salary using the interest from the endowments. The Bungdzö had several thousands of [dotse](#) as their endowment which they gave out as loans. I remember in the past that the Chabu would go to borrow money when they have to give the salary. However, later on, they had [dayang](#) and [trangga](#) garpo more abundant than shit. At the time that they were developing very well, then it was toppled.

They would select the candidates from the 23 [khamtsen](#): 6 from the Khampas and 6 from the [Ütsang](#) [tib. dbus gtsang] (Central Tibet) and they asked for approval from Tenma [deity] and she selected 8 candidates and asked the Gadong deity for approval. Gadong approved 2 [Khampa](#) and 2 monks from [Ütsang](#).

The Chabu position was only given to monks from [Ütsang](#). The Chabril and the Jama were appointed by the Khempo and the Lama [könyer](#) [tib. bla ma dkon gnyer] was appointed by the Nyertsang. The people working under them would be appointed by themselves.

Q

What was the work of the Chabu?

A

The Chabu's job was to receive and lend capital [tib. ma rtsa gtong len]. They had to give salary in the form of things like [tsampa](#), grain and money every month and there were also estates for the Chabu to use.

Q

The Bungdzö's estates were the ones the 13th Dalai Lama returned, right?

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#### A

Yes. The Chabu had the estates which they had held from the early times like [Ramagang](#), Thangkar [tib. thang dkar] and Bare, etc. There were 4 [chabu](#); the [Tshaja](#), Phuja, Kongja and [Laja](#) (labrang [chandzö](#)). These were called bugpa laja [shi](#) [tib. sbug pa bla phyag bzhi]. The biggest of the [nachen](#) was Tsha. When there were important matters to discuss [the 4 chabu] they added the [gegö](#) and umdze, and if they still couldn't settle things, they would call the 3 bigger [khamtsen](#) and 13 middle ones and the 7 small ones. If it was a matter related to the government, the [Loseling](#) Khempo would attend the [tsongdu](#). [unclear].

The 4 Chabu and the Chabril went to meet the Khempo after the mid-day [chöra](#) [debating grove session]. They called one person from each of the 23 [khamtsen](#) and the Chabu would deliver the message. The meeting (tsongdu) would include 23 people from the 23 Khamtsen, the 4 Chabu, the 2 [Uchö](#) and the Khempo.

It was imposing when the [tsongdu](#) was held. At first they would seek an audience and the hand blessing from the Khempo and then they were seated. The Gegö would be seated at the head and then the [Umdze](#) sat. The 4 [chabu](#) sat on the right side and the 4 [bungdzö](#) sat on the left side. The Nyertsang and the Nachen would sit in a line. The hall would be packed and all would keep silent and not even cough. Then tea was served in two big kettles carried on each side. After the tea, they brought [tsampa](#) in small bags to all the people and the food made from butter and cheese called [thü](#) [tib. thud]) was served in plates for the Chabu and the Gegö. The others were given pieces of [thü](#) in their hands. And then they would knead the [pag](#) in their bowls and then put it in a cloth and then put tea in their bowls and eat the [pag](#) while drinking tea. It was up to each monk whether or not to eat the [pag](#) there [or take it home].

After the Gegö banged on the table several times as a signal, the door of the hall would be closed. The Chabril and the house manager would sit outside near the door and they would not let people enter the [tsongdu](#) meeting. They stopped the monks coming from the east and the west. At the meeting, the Khempo would say that the government gave such and such orders and we have to agree to do such and such things. Therefore, we must discuss what we should do. After they discussed what should be done, they made some decisions. Then the [tsongdu](#) was adjourned and the senior (tib. drepa [bgres pa] monks of the Khamtsen would tell the Khamtsen [gegen](#) to call the Khamtsen [tsongdu](#) and he would pass down whatever decisions the Tratsang [tsongdu](#) had made.

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Q

Would all the monks in the Khamtsen attend the Khamtsen [tsondu](#)?

A

Yes.

Q

In general, how many monks would there be in the bigger Khamtsen [tsondu](#) and the smaller Khamtsen [tsondu](#)?

A

In our [Tsha Khamtsen](#), there were 70 [tsondu](#) members. There would be 20-30 [tsondu](#) members if all couldn't come. And the Khamtsen had to put the common seal and say that they will listen to the order from the [dewashung](#) (Tibetan government). The Khempo would put the seal of the [tratsang](#) and make a guarantee to the government. The Khamtsen would then put the seal away in the seal box.

Q

Usually, who would lock the seal box?

A

The Khamtsen senior monks (drepa) would lock it and the Jigen would seal it. And the Jigen and the Khamtsen [gegen](#) took the seal box and waited in front of the Khempo's door.

Q

How many years did you do the Gegö position?

A

I did the Gegö for 1 year.

Q

Was the Gegö term one year?

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A

The term was 6 months, but some did it for 1 year.

Q

Who would you ask for the Gegö position?

A

First we asked the Khempo and he would chose the suitable ones as candidates.

Q

Would you have to compete (tib. shutsang [zhu 'tshangs]) to secure the Gegö position?

A

Yes, but they would appoint the older ones.

Q

Was there an age limit?

A

They appointed the ones who had been monks for bout 25 years.

Q

Was there any difference between the monks from [Ütsang](#), [Amdo](#) and Kham as to who got the Gegö position?

A

Usually, the Gegö position was given to the [Ütsang](#) monks. It was easy for me to get the Gegö position. When I asked the Khempo for the position, he said, "Are you going to ask for it?" I thought he would say no, but he said "okay, it is alright. I need a person who allows me to work less." [tib. red/ tag tag red /nga la yang dpung pa yang ba zhig dgos]. Then we chitchatted for a while and then he said, "Come over on a auspicious date [tib. tses grangs yag pa]." Then I went there on Friday which was my auspicious day (tib. lasa [bla gza'] and I told him that you told me to come on an auspicious date, so I came here

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today." He said "Oh! Yes, I did. Is today your lasa?" I said yes and he said we were both born in the Sheep year and today is also my lasa." On that day, the Gegö position was confirmed.

Q

What is your element?

A

I was born in the Fire-Sheep Year and I am 77 years old [76 in Western age].

Q

Who was that Khempo?

A

He was called [Tsangpa](#) Khempo Yeshe Jinpa [tib. ye shes sbyin pa]. He was one cycle of 12 animal years older than me, so he would be 88 years old now.

Q

Is he still alive?

A

He has passed away. The former Gegö took his term for 2 years, and then I became the Gegö. Normally, the Gegö would have to seek an audience with the Khempo and receive the order from the Khempo at the Mönlam [tsog](#) in Lhasa. Then the Gegö attended the mid-day [tsog](#) at the Mönlam. The Chabril would tell him to stand up from the row and then made him sit in the head row. After I received the order, I went for a pilgrimage.

Q

Where did you have to go to receive the order?

A

I went to receive the order in the Khempo's apartment.

Q

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What date did you receive the order?

A

It was up to our choice to choose an auspicious day. On the 4th lunar day, the seating arrangement (tib. tredzin [gral 'dzin]) of the Mönlam was done and I received the order on the 5th on my auspicious day. After the morning [tsog](#) I went to the Shengo's office.

Q

At that time, you took the Geyog who yelled, "Make way!" [tib. 'o jo jo], right?

A

Yes. When I went to see the Khempo, he put a cushion with a cotton rug (tib. sangka [bzang kha]) on it and he serve me [droma dresi](#) and tea and I offered him a [khata](#).

Q

Do you have to prostrate?

A

No, because I had the padding on my shoulders. I would have prostrated if I didn't have the padding. They gave me the order that I have to do my job well and he said, "I don't need to tell you about the [Shengo](#) office because you are familiar with it. Please do it without delay which will make me relax and work less and I will talk later." Then he gave me a layer of fried cookies and some plates of dry fruits and a Khata Ashe and I offered him a [khata](#) and I then I returned.

Q

Did you have to offer him money for the mandala offering (tib. mendre tendö [tib. man dral rten dod])?

A

Yes.

When I entered the khempo's [labrang](#), there was no one receiving me, but when I returned, the Khempo would stand near his door and he would say, "Congratulations" (tib. tashi deleg [bkra shis bde legs]). Then I went back to my [shag](#) and the monks would

come there to offer [khata](#) scarves to me. The Labrang [nyerpa](#) would come there with fried cookies and dried fruits and the Nyerpa would offer me a [khata](#) saying that this [khata](#) is for your orders [appointment](tib. kagyur jedar [bka' sgyur mjal dar]).

After that, the [gidru](#) (disciples) of the [Tshaja](#) and Phuja also came to offer [khata](#) saying that they were sent by the [Tshaja](#) and Phuja to offer khatas. The [Umdze](#) also would send his [gidru](#). All of them would never come in person. Even the ex-Gegö and the ex-Shengo would not come in person to offer scarves. All of them would send their [gidru](#) or whoever they wanted to send.

After that, the Gegö went to Shengo's office to start his work. There, the 2 [Shengo](#) would give him a [khata](#) and they would go through the motions of saying, "Now, we are your new boss?" The Chagdampa would tell the other people in the Shengo's office, "He is the new Gegö." Until the 9th lunar month, there was no work. On the 2nd of the 9th month, the Gegö started working. Before that, the Gegö had to invite the 4 Chabu and the 4 Bungdzö and give them a feast no matter whether he wanted to or didn't want to. At that time, I also invited all the ex-Gegö and the ex-Shengo because I knew all of them. In the morning, the Gegö had to serve them tea, [pag](#), stuffed lungs, tripe made with spices [tib. grod pa kha tsha] and 4 cold dishes and 4 hot dishes [tib. tsha tshal bzhi dang grang tshal bzhi]. Then the [gegö](#) had to serve melted butter with sweet potatoes [tib. gro ma mar khu] and other dishes. In the evening, the [gegö](#) have to serve first class foods in 8 bowls and 4 plates [tib. dkar brgyad sders bzhi] with rice. And on the next days, the Gegö had to hold the inauguration ceremony in the Khamtsen.

Q

Did they offer you [khata](#) scarves when you held the inauguration ceremony in the Khamtsen?

A

No. At the inauguration ceremony, the Gegö had to wear his [special] clothes and go to the Khamtsen and hold the inauguration ceremony before dawn by sitting on the throne in the Khamtsen. On that day, the ex-Gegö and ex-Shengo would bring their wooden [eating] bowls and we put porcelain bowls with stands for the Chabu. At the formal inauguration ceremony, they would also bring their wooden bowls and the Chabu would entertain the guests. In the morning, when the Gegö held the inauguration ceremony in the Khamtsen, he went for pilgrimage and then sat on the throne.

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Q

At that time, did they hold the [tsog](#) in the Khamtsen?

A

There was no [tsog](#) in the Khamtsen, but they put the colorful cushions for the guests.

Q

Among the guests, there were both lay people and the monks, right?

A

Yes. The monastery officials were arranged to stay in separate quarters. The first [khata](#) nangdzö and an envelope [with money] would be offered by the Khamtsen. Then the Khamtsen [tsongdu](#) members would come in turns to offer [khata](#) scarves to the Gegö, and then the Khamtsen members came. After them, the Tratsang [Uchö](#) would offer a [khata](#) and in person. The Chabu also came in person and the ex-Gegö and ex-Shengo would offer [khata](#) scarves and would pull down their shawls from the shoulders to show respect. Then I would go carrying incense in the Khamtsen. I just looked into the College's [dukhang](#) (assembly hall) but didn't enter.

Q

What time would that happen?

A

It would be like 9 a.m. Then they went for pilgrimage and the guests would go carrying the incense and the monks in the [khamtsen](#) would entertain them by serving tea, etc. In the Tratsang, the Gegö would be seated on the throne and receive the [khata](#) scarves from friends and then all the guests would be invited to the roof of the [dukhang](#) where there was a skylight (tib. sengyang [seng g.yab] where the Nyertsang would serve tea. Then the [tsog](#) would be held and the Gegö would bang his staff on the ground making the sound "deng deng".

Q

Before the [tsog](#), where did the Gegö sit after the pilgrimage?



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A

He sat on his chair. And just before the [tsog](#) was held, the Gegö would put the padding on his shoulders and bang his staff on the ground like the [Shengo](#).

Q

Did they call this staff sergyug (tib. gser rgyug)?

A

Yes. In the [tsog](#), the Gegö would act like the [Shengo](#) and do three prostrations and then lead the first tea and read the prayer requesting letter and then give the speech regarding the discipline. The Gegö would give speeches to the Labrang [chandzö](#) and the Chabu, Bungdzö, Nyertsang, Jama, and the sweepers. Then the Gegö would go home and the [tsog](#) would be finished. Then the Gegö would seek an audience with the Khempo.

Q

He gave the audience upstairs of the [labrang](#), right?

A

Yes. They would put a cushion with a satin cover and put a middle size table [tib. trimajo [khri ma lcog] on which they use stands for the bowls for serving tea. It was said that since the [appointment] order had been given, the Gegö would be called "mister" (tib. kusho [sku zhabs]) and was allowed to have stands for his bowls.

Q

We [shungshab](#) (government officials) were also like this. All of the [shungshab](#) were called [kungö](#), but actually they were not [kungö](#). Now [in exile] even the ones who are not [shungshab](#) are also called [kungö](#).

A

Yes, all the women were called Nyila [tib. snying lags].

Q

Then what did you do?

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A

After the [tsog](#), they put a double cushion [to sit on] and used the table called trimajo to serve [droma dresi](#) and tea. Then the Gegö would go home and take out the padding and the some people would come to offer him [khata](#) scarves.

Q

When you went to the Khempo, did you go alone?

A

Only the Geyog would help me. After that, there was no [chöra](#) (debating grove) for 15 days. Then nobody came to my [shag](#).

Q

How would the old Gegö's work end?

A

Before he terminated, it was difficult for him because he had to give a [tonggo](#) in which he had to give 27 [traja](#) and first class rice [thukpa](#) and he was not allowed to give less than 3 [sho](#) as [gye](#) (alms) [per monk].

Q

How would he serve those [27] teas [traja]?

A

He served those prayer sessions with tea when he gave the three day [tonggo](#) which was called dūsang [tib. dus bzang]. It was held at the end of the 8th lunar month on 29th-30th days. In the past, that might be time the religious dance called Demo Guncham [tib. de mo dgu 'cham] was performed. On that day, the old Gegö would give the [gye](#) (alms) and then the religious dance was performed. Then the [Umdze](#) would recite the prayer called Tungshag [tib. dung bshags] and the Gegö would prostrate three times and he would say the prayers for repenting his negativities [tib. bshags pa 'bul]. On the next day, at the first [traja](#) tea, the old Gegö would come on the 2nd of 9th lunar month and just before the [traja](#) was over, the [Umdze](#) would recite Migtsema [tib. dmigs brtse ma], the prayer to

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Tsongkhapa using very long tones [tib. rta ring]. The Gegö would wear his cloak and his [hat](#) and stand in the [dukhang](#) and then he would step back until he reached the threshold and then he took off his [hat](#) and cloak outside the [dukhang](#) at the [gomchor](#) and went to the [labrang](#) where he would offer [mendre tensum](#). The [labrang](#) [of abbot] would put a [khata](#) nangdzö scarf on his neck and serve tea and [droma dresi](#). Then he went to the [gönkhang](#) and propitiated the protector deities (tib. [trinjö](#) [tib. 'phrin bcol]).

Then he went to the Chabu where they had put a new satin cushion and again tea and [droma dresi](#) were served. The Chabu would go through the motions of saying, "You have been doing a wonderful job." [tib. [gang](#) min tshad yin zer ga byas] and they put on a [khata](#) nangdzö scarf on him. Then he, while wearing two [khata](#) nangdzö scarves, went to the Bungdzö where they would do the same to him. Then he went to his [shag](#) wearing three [khata](#) nangdzö scarves.

Q

At this time, the [tsog](#) was over, right?

A

The [tsog](#) had started to disperse. When he reached the [labrang](#), the [tsog](#) would be over and the monks would come to offer him [khata](#) scarves. From that evening, he would take off the padding from his shoulders. The Chabu and Bungdzö would tell him, "You have been doing a wonderful job for one year and please help us if the [tratsang](#) needs your help [in the future]."

They would call them [the ex-Gegö] when they held the Tsondu gyendzom and they would also call the Khempo of the monasteries. Some of the ex-Gegö would be sent to collect grain loans (tib. drundepa ['bru 'ded pa]) and be sent to look after the harvest (tib. töngyaba [tib. ston rgyab pa], and the people like us would be sent to be the Khempo of branch monasteries and we also were the ones who went as a representative to the Legjö Office and would also go as a candidate for the [Tshaja](#) position. I failed the first time when I was among the candidates for the [Tshaja](#) position because [Taktra](#) didn't approve me and gave it to the former [Tshaja](#).

Q

Can the ex-Gegö go as a [Tshaja](#) candidate?

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A

I went as the [Tshaja](#) candidate before I became the Gegö. I was almost the first candidate for the [Shengo](#), but I didn't get it because it depended on having a backer. It was like selling and buying the position. The Gegö got 15 shares of [gye](#) and he had to give a lot of [tonggo](#) just before the end of his term, so everything [money acquired] would be empty. If you were lucky, the income and the expenses would just barely balance. Otherwise, it would not be balanced [they would take a loss]. I could just barely get them balanced so I didn't need to take loans and got the fame of being a Gegö.

Since I became the Gegö, I don't need to pull down my shawl as a salute when I went to see the Khempo and in the Chabu's office and I would be called mister. If an ordinary monk went to the Chabu's office, they would make him stand. Also, if there were some important work to do, they would let them sit on a round cushion (tib. denkor [gdan skor]). When we went there, they would tell me to sit on the thick square cushion (tib. böden ['bol gdan]).

Q

What would you do after the Gegö's term ended?

A

After that, there would be a break in the meeting of the [chöra](#) [debating grove], and then after 3-4 days, the [labrang](#) would invite me for a whole day party where we sat in the Chandzö's office. In the morning, they served [pag](#), droma, and then lunch and dinner followed by nine stacked up layers of fried cookies (tib. khabse [kha zas]) and five leather plates of dry fruits. Then the Labrang [chandzö](#) would come and offer 2 [khata](#) subchi scarves and the ex-Gegö would ask for the leave from the [labrang](#). On the next day, the Nyertsang would give a whole day party the same as the [labrang](#) had done. On the third day, the [Loseling](#) Upper Jiso (tib. simteng [gzim steng] would give the same party. [Gomang](#) would not give a party.

Q

Would the Jiso give the party in his [shag](#)?

A

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No, he would give it in his office. On the next day, The Tashi Khangsar would also give the same party. And on the next day, all the labrang [of incarnate lamas] would come to the Gegö to seek the permission to keep flowers, dogs, horses, make horse troughs, dry horse dung and to use canopies, etc. They had to pay [trangga](#) garpo [money] for that. Also, if someone was not healthy, they had to pay 5 [sho](#) to seek permission to wear boots at the Traja. Otherwise, they have to go bare-footed. They would give permission for wearing boots only to the elderly monks and not to the younger ones. The ranks above the ex-Gegö and ex-Shengo were allowed to wear boots. During this time, the Gegö would get so many [khata](#) scarves that it would take two people to carry them.

Q

Were there any kind of permission that the Geyog had to seek?

A

The Geyog, Shingyer and Chagdampa had to seek the permission to wear the boots made from cotton that were called resom (tib. ras zom] in one's own [tratsang](#).

Q

Were there any permissions that the Thabyog had to seek?

A

Yes, there were a lot. Just before the Mönlam, the [Shengo](#), Chagdampa, [Shingnyer](#) and the Geyog had to go to the [Laji](#), and the [Laji](#) would give orders to each. All the Khempo would in turns tell you that you all have to work well and be pleasing [tib. dang ba 'dren pa]. This would take about 3 hours.

Q

Would they stand when the orders were given?

A

All 19 Geyog would stand there.

Q

That will be hard for them, right?

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A

Yes. Some of them would even tremble [tib. 'dar] while standing.

Q

How about the 2 [Shengo](#)?

A

They would be seated on their cushions.

Q

The [Shengo](#) also had to receive orders?

A

The orders were given to the Chagdampa and [Shingnyer](#) and the Geyog. The [Shengo](#) will hear these although they don't receive the orders.

Q

Were the Chabril and Jama there too?

A

Yes. After going to the [Laji](#), the [Loseling](#) Chagdampa, [Shingnyer](#) and Geyog had to go to the [Loseling](#) Khempo to receive orders. After that, the Chagdampa, [Shingnyer](#) and Geyog had to go to the Gegö and receive orders. The Gegö would give them orders while they were standing. After the giving of orders was over, the Gegö would tell the Chagdampa and [Shingnyer](#) to sit and they would chitchat. The Geyog would be told to go out to the next room and sit there. I was the one to whom the Chabril and Nangma would ask questions [when they don't know the customs] and I would tell them something. During the Mönlam it was also like that.

After the evening tea, the [Shengo](#) would send the Chabril to call me and I would have to go to the temple where the 16 Arhats [tib. gnas brtan bcu drug] were located almost every alternative days when the [Shengo](#) were practicing giving orders. I would bang the table if the [Shengo](#) made mistakes when giving orders and I would make corrections. After that, we would come back to the Shengo's office and chitchat until 11-12 p.m. Also, the

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[Shengo](#) would give suggestions and make comments regarding my Chagdampa work. Although I can't really say it, in reality I was their [Shengo's] teacher and all of them would seek my advice.

I was also called by the [Gomang](#) and [Deyang](#) Shengos to ask me things. They would say, "It is the like the saying, if the work is done well, it doesn't make any difference even if a nun becomes the king." [tib. las ka gra 'grig po byung na / rgyal po a nes byas kyang khyad par med]. Some [Gomang](#) Shengo would tell me, "In [Gomang](#), we only have people who cause trouble, so please tell us truthfully what we should do." And some would say in a kidding manner, "Uncle! Please, don't let us down." [tib. a khu/ ko thag ma glod rogs byed]. I would also teach them privately what to do.

There was one late Geyog called Tharchin La [tib. mthar phyin lags] who had been the Geyog since he was 18 years old. That was the year when there was the Wood-Dragon British war. He would tell me, "You are the only [capable] one among the four of them [the 2 [Shengo](#) and 2 Chagdampa]." He had lot of things to tell about how the 13th Dalai Lama went to China and India. He taught me a lot. Therefore, all people trusted that I was familiar with things [customs and rules].

When the [trüku](#) did their inauguration ceremony, they would always call me and ask me about the rules of the inauguration ceremony, and when they held the [geshe](#) exams, etc. Almost all the [trüku](#) called me when they did those things.

Q

Did anybody from the monasteries that were established in India ask you about things?

A

From Mongood [where Drepung is located], they asked me a little bit, otherwise, there wasn't anybody asking me.

Q

When you were the Gegö and staying in your [shag](#), there were many people coming to ask for permissions, so how long would those take?

A

It would take about 5-6 days. And then the [chöra](#) would start.

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Q

Was it the summer [chöra](#) (tib. yarchö [dbyar chos])?

A

That was the sakar [tib. sa dkar] [chöra](#) when they whitewashed the houses. That 15 days. The [chöra](#) started when the sun set on the [tratsang](#) tamarisk decoration (tib. penbe [spen bad]) on the roof. Altogether, there were 8 [chöra](#).

Q

What do you mean when the sun set on the tamarisk decoration?

A

That means that the [chöra](#) started at sunset in the evening. On that night, they would recite 21 Tara Prayers and then recited up to 30-35 Tara Prayers. In the middle of the [chöra](#), they would recited up to 70 Tara Prayers and many other prayers and it go on until like 11 p.m. I had to be there. In the morning, when there was [gye](#), I went to the [mangja](#). If there was no [mangja](#), I went to the morning [chöra](#) (tib. [shogchö](#) [tib. zhogs chos] and at 8 a.m I went to the [traja](#) and after that it would about 10 p.m and then I went to clean the tea leaves (tib. chage [ja gad]) and then I went home to eat. After that it would be time for the miday [chöra](#) (tib. [nyinchö](#) [tib. nyin chos]). Then it would be like 3 p.m. and then the Khamtsen would serve [tshomja](#) and there will be some leisure time. In the evening, there also was a [chöra](#).

During the Mönlam, I felt like my heart was turned upside down because I was seated at the head and all the lamas were seated below me. Above me, there was only Detrug Lama [tib. sde drug bla ma ] who was a Huthothu.

Q

Did the Gegö have a throne at the Mönlam?

A

No. We sat on a cotton cushion called dingnga (tib. gding ba). The Geyog would come to call me and would then escort me carrying my cloak. He would shout, "Make way." (tib.



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phanjoshe [tib. phar sbyor zhig?]). The Geyog would also come to escort me when I was going back.

Q

What were the 8 [chöthog](#)?

A

The autumn [chöthog](#) (tib. tönchö [ston chos] for one month, the summer [chöthog](#) (tib. yarchö [dbyar chos ] for one month, the winter [chöthog](#) (tib. günchö [dgun chos] for one month, the spring [chöthog](#) (tib. jichö [dpyid chos ]) for one month, two monthly [chöra](#) (tib. dachö [zla chos]) and two 15 days [chöra](#) (tib. jönga [chöra](#) [bco lnga chos ra]. The Gegö had to patrol to maintain discipline in the Khamtsen. They [monks] were not allowed to dry bedding and cushions in the sun. [unclear].

Q

They were only allowed to keep the things they need in their [shag](#), right?

A

We would not search their things in their [shag](#) and they were not allowed to sunbathe and chichat during the [tsog](#) time. If monks stayed in their [shag](#) during the [tsog](#) time, they would lock the door from outside and pretend there was nobody in the [shag](#).

Q

Did you have to do anything else regarding the Gegö?

A

That's all for the Gegö.

Q

What monastery officials (lene) were there under the Gegö?

A

There was the Chabril.

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Q

How would the Chabril get appointed and what would they do?

A

Chabril was appointed by the [Shengo](#). The Chabril had to deliver all the messages but sometimes he would send his servant called Chabyog [tib. chab g.yog] to deliver the messages.

Q

How many Chabril were there?

A

There was only one.

Q

Did the Chabril also take charge of discipline like the Gegö?

A

Yes, he did the same work, but he didn't have power like the Gegö. The Gegö was like the [lord](#) (tib. pompo [dpon po] and did not deliver messages. The Chabril also had to serve the Khempo.

Q

He also had to listen to the Gegö, right?

A

Yes. He had to serve the Gegö and take charge of discipline in the Traja, for example, telling monks to keep quiet. There was also one monk called the Chösongnga [tib. chos srung ba] who was appointed by the Gegö. The Jama stayed in the [rungskhang](#).

Q

How many Jama were there?

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A

There was only one who was appointed by the [labrang](#) [abbot]. He would come when they made the fire and give the orders to the Thabyog. The Könyer [tib. dkon gnyer] had to take care of the temples and propitiate the deities and the Gompo [tib. mgon po ba] would propitiate the deities (tib. gangso [bskangs gso]).

Q

Who appointed the Könyer and the Gompo?

A

The Nyertsang appointed the Könyer and Gompo and the Chabu appointed the Jama. The Jama were also appointed by the Bungdzö.

Q

What was the Nyertsang?

A

It was like a house mother who gave the [tonggo](#) ceremonies.

Q

Who was the head of the Nyertsang?

A

The [shagtsang](#) of the Nyertsang would take charge. The [nyertsang](#) had 7 estates.

Q

Was the Nyertsang managed by the private [shagtsang](#) or what?

A

It rotated every three years.

Q

How did they select the Nyertsang?

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A

The Chabu would select the candidates. People had to request to get this position. Then they would ask the deities for prophecies by going into trance and also would ask lamas for their divination. After getting appointed, they moved from their [shag](#) to the [nyertsang](#).

Q

What is the term of office for the Nyertsang?

A

It is three years. They also had to give each monk one [bo](#) of [tsampa](#) and 7-8 khabse (fried cookies) which was made using one [khe](#) of wheat for 4 khabse. They also gave khabse to the monks during the New Year and they would have to invite 400-500 monastery officials and lamas for a party where they served [pag](#), noodles, yogurt mixed with rice and butter (tib. shomdre [zho 'bras]) and wild sweet potatoes with melted butter (tib. troma markhu [gro ma mar khu]. They used about 35 mutton carcasses and 4 beef carcasses and 4,000-5,000 eggs at the Lama New Year (tib. Lama Losar [bla ma lo gsar]. They would call 4 Chinese food cooks (tib. gyase machen [rgya zas ma byan].

Q

When would they serve these?

A

They served these before the Mönlam because they had to attend the Mönlam.

Q

They just called this Lama Losar, right?

A

Yes. On the first day of the New Year, they only served [pag](#) with water (tib. chupag [chu spags]) and the monks stayed in their [shag](#).

Q

When would they start Losar in the monastery?

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A

They started it from 19th-20th [of the 12th lunar month] and continued until they came to the Mönlam.

Q

Was it loose on discipline during these days?

A

Yes, the monks would perform opera, sing songs and sing opera songs and play [bagchen](#) (tib. sbag chen] (a kind of majong). They would become like crazy [tib. smyo sdod kyi red] in the monastery. When they played [bagchen](#) and dice after dark, they closed their windows. Usually, it was not allowed to play majong at night because it would disturb the monks' sleep. The senior monks would tell him, "Don't you want to control yourself or do you want me to beat you up with a stick? [tib. tshod zin gyi min pas kas/ rgyag pa cig dgos 'du gas] I lived in the Tsha jikhang where all the upstairs were mine. I had a space of 4 pillars with the kitchen having 2 pillars and the storeroom 4 pillars.

Q

Was that in the Khamtsen?

A

Yes.

Q

Did you build it?

A

It was the jikhang that belonged to the Khamtsen, but I took off the roof and renovated it. Everyone was amazed at the way I renovated it. I had 8 long pillars in the veranda where I used a canopy. It was really nice with good privacy because I made an entrance door on the roof, so when I entered this door, all the spaces were mine. I was on the third floor and in the other lower floors there were about 35-36 monk's [shag](#). We had a main gate which was closed at night. At night the monks are not allowed to go outside. However, some

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young monks would urinate on the door hinge so that it would not make the sound "tsir" and then they went out.

Q

Could you own the house yourself?

A

Yes. I got the permanent right of ownership. I had 4 [gidru](#). I didn't need to pay rent and when I renovated it, the Khamtsen helped me with wood materials, bricks and stones. I hired all the carpenters and the masons and renovated it which was admired by all people.

Q

Other than Losar, were there any occasions for the monks to enjoy themselves?

A

No.

Q

Drepung [Shotön](#), the opera festival was for 2 days, right?

A

Yes. At that time, my [shag](#) will be packed with people. And there was the bathing picnic (tib, chabshug [chab zhugs]) whichi was held in the orchard (tib linga [gling ga]).

Q

On that day, would the monastery officials also enjoy themselves?

A

Yes, and the [Shengo](#) would not say anything.

Q

What else regarding the Tratsang?

A

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That's all for the Tratsang. All 23 [khamtsen](#) had their own rules of discipline, although there was a common discipline for all the monks.

Q

The Gegö was appointed by the Khempo, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Did he have to report to the government?

A

No. They didn't need to report for the appointment of the [Umdze](#) and the Bungdzö also. Only the three Chabu had to be reported because of that dispute.

Q

You said that the Gegö started his work on the day when they did the religious dance called Demo Guncham, right?

A

Yes. The Demo Guncham was done on the dates 29th-30th.

Q

At that time, did the [Loseling](#) monks come down to Tengyeling?

A

Yes. All the monasery officials would come down. On the 2nd, just before the [chöra](#) was finished, the Gegö started his work. I remember the Demo Guncham a little bit. The monks wore the black [hat](#) costume.

Q

It was a pity that Tengyeling was no more [it was torn down by the government]. I heard that it was very large. We can see the remaining walls.

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A

It was not smaller than Tsomönling.

Q

How many Mitsen were there in the [Tsha Khamtsen](#)?

A

There were three: Tshümei [tib. tshul smad] Mitsen and Dingkha Mitsen where the monks from Tölung [tib. stod lung] belonged. The monks from the Nyel [tib. gnyal] belonged to Nyepa Mitsen. And the monks from Wöl [tib. 'ol] also came to Tsha. Samdong [tib. zam gdong] was also in [Tsha Khamtsen](#).

Q

Were there monks from [Amdo](#) in [Tsha Khamtsen](#)?

A

No. In Tsha, only the Khampas from Mankham [tib. smar khams] came to Tsha. Not all the Khampas. All the monks from Litang belonged to Pompora [tib. spom po ra]. All the monks from Ba [tib. 'ba'] belong to Phara Khamtsen. Triu [tib. [tre](#) hor ] Khampas belonged to Hamdong. All the monks from Chamdo belonged to Lhopa Khamtsen and the monks from Minyag [tib. mi nyag] belong to the Minyag Khamtsen. All the monks from Traya [tib. brag g.yab] belong to Nyare [tib. nyag re].

Q

Where would monks from [Tö](#) [tib. stod] belong?

A

Some belonged to the Pethup [?] Khamtsen and some belonged to Guge [tib. gu ge]. People from Khunu [tib. khu nu] and Piti [tib. spi ti] belonged to Guge. Most of the monks from Ladakh belong to Pethup.

When there were disputes among the Khamtsen they would be settled by the Tratsang. Disputes between the Tratsang would be settled by the [Laji](#) and if the [Laji](#) couldn't settle it, it was appealed to the government.



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Q

How many [chöshi](#) did [Loseling](#) possess?

A

There was Ngodrubding [tib. dngos grub lding] and Gyaritse [tib. rgya ro tshal], and then in Gang [tib. sgang] there was Karngo [?] Shiga, Nyethang Norbugang [tib. mnyes thang nor bus gang] and then there was Ramgang Dendrong [?] and Sherong [tib. she rong?], Khara Tseese [tib. mkhar rag tsher gseb], Büde [tib. sbud bde], Bare [?] and Gyere [tib] and Thangkar [tib. thang dkar] in Bontö [tib. 'brom stod]. And in Phenpo Shiling [?] and Sungkhar [tib. zungs mkhar], Mugo [?]. Altogether, there were 14 estates.

Q

Were these all in the Ü [tib. dbus] area [ Central Tibet]?

A

Yes, in [Tsang](#), there was Gyantse Mesong, Phünde [tib. phun bde], which had been bought from [Kapshöba](#), Tsen Gyawog [?] and the Penam Gadong [tib. pa snam dga' gdong] monastery. In [Tö](#), there was Purang Shempeling [tib. spu hreng bshad 'phel gling].